



STATE OF MAINE
COMMISSION ON GOVERNMENTAL ETHICS
AND ELECTION PRACTICES
135 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0135

ADVISORY FOR MAINE CLEAN ELECTION ACT CANDIDATES ON FOOD AND TRAVEL EXPENSES

During the current campaign reporting cycle, the staff of the *Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices* noticed that some candidates are uncertain about the rules regarding spending Maine Clean Election Act (MCEA) funds on food and for vehicle travel.

Food Expenditures

Candidates may spend a reasonable amount of MCEA funds on food for campaign events or to feed volunteers while they are working. Legislative candidates should not use MCEA funds to purchase food that is consumed only by the candidate and/or the candidate's spouse. Gubernatorial candidates may use MCEA funds to purchase meals for the candidate and/or candidate's spouse if associated with travel for campaign purposes. Candidates and treasurers should be aware that reimbursement of food costs with MCEA funds is a sensitive issue, and payments for food are scrutinized closely by the press and the Commission staff.

Vehicle Travel

Candidates may choose to have the campaign reimburse them for vehicle travel at the reimbursement rate for state employees (currently \$.36 per mile) or for amounts actually paid for fuel and repairs (pro-rated to reflect only campaign usage). Candidates should keep a record for each campaign trip that includes: date of travel, number of miles traveled, origination, destination, and purpose of travel. Although candidates are free to choose either of the reimbursement methods described above, the Commission staff strongly recommends using the state mileage reimbursement rate.

Expenditure Guidelines

The advice in this memo is based on the Commission's MCEA Expenditure Guidelines, which can be found at www.maine.gov/ethics. The guidelines are updated every two years, and you are welcome to offer the Commission advice if you believe the guidelines should be changed. Please also see pages 55-56 of the 2006 Candidate's Guide.

If you have questions, please call the Commission staff at (207) 287-4179. Thank you.